



What is IFAD?

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) works where poverty and hunger are deepest: in the most remote regions of developing countries and fragile situations, where few development agencies venture. By investing in rural people, and in small and medium-sized enterprises, our work reduces poverty and hunger and results in greater resilience. IFAD's work helps people change their lives and communities, and contributes directly to the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

IFAD is both a specialized United Nations agency and an international financial institution (IFI). This unique identity allows us to consistently deliver results on the ground and in the policy arena that benefit rural communities. IFAD is among the top multilateral institutions working in agriculture in Africa.

Where we work¹

- West and Central Africa: 23 countries with 41 ongoing programmes and projects
- East and Southern Africa: 17 countries with 44 ongoing programmes and projects
- Asia and the Pacific: 21 countries with 61 ongoing programmes and projects
- Latin America and the Caribbean: 18 countries with 31 ongoing programmes and projects
- Near East, North Africa and Europe: 18 countries with 34 ongoing programmes and projects

IFAD's model

IFAD provides low-interest loans and grants to developing countries and mobilizes cofinancing from Member States, developing countries and project participants themselves. To date, we have leveraged around US\$26.1 billion and contributed an additional

US\$18.5 billion for agriculture and rural development. We support programmes and projects that are inclusive of women, youth and indigenous peoples. Our bottom-up approach is community-driven. Small-scale agriculture is central to our model. IFAD's investments reduce poverty by 5.6-9.9 per cent (compared with 3-7 per cent for cash transfer programmes).

How do we achieve results?

Transforming agriculture and rural communities

Rural development is central to ending hunger and poverty, and crucial to meeting the new SDGs. IFAD-supported projects connect poor rural people to markets and services so they can grow more and earn more. More than that, our projects also transform rural communities economically and socially, and promote gender equality and inclusiveness.

Outputs reported in 2016 include:

- 2 million people trained in crop production practices and technologies; 52 per cent were women
- 3.6 million hectares of common-property-resource land under improved management
- 16,000 kilometres of roads constructed or repaired
- 32,000 marketing groups formed or strengthened
- 1 million people trained in business and entrepreneurship
- 50 per cent of people receiving services from IFAD-supported projects were women

Climate and environment

Smallholder farmers and other rural people bear the brunt of climate change. Rising sea levels and more intense droughts, storms and floods are putting pressure on the ecosystems farmers depend on.

¹ As of 31 December 2016.

IFAD promotes agricultural growth that is environmentally sustainable and integrated into ecosystems. We also help farmers become more resilient. IFAD's Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme is the largest global climate adaptation programme for smallholder farmers.

Supporting inclusive rural finance

Most of the world's 767 million poorest people live without reliable income, shelter or food. Saving or borrowing small amounts can make a huge difference to their lives. IFAD is one of the world's largest lenders supporting inclusive rural finance. Our projects help poor rural people gain access to financial services, including savings, loans, insurance and remittances. IFAD's Financing Facility for Remittances reduces the costs of sending money home and promotes productive rural investment by migrants.

Outputs reported in 2016 include:

- 22 million voluntary savers; 63 per cent were women
- 4 million active borrowers from IFAD-assisted microfinance institutions; 54 per cent were women
- 15 per cent of IFAD's portfolio is dedicated to rural finance

Women and nutrition

Women are major contributors to agriculture and rural economies, yet they have significantly less access than men to services, markets and assets, including land. Rural women often lack authority in their homes, organizations and communities. IFAD works to help rural women achieve greater equality with men and more control over their lives and assets. Women make up about half of all participants in projects we support.

Empowering women is also effective in reducing chronic child malnutrition. Women are more likely than men to spend their earnings on food and education. IFAD is increasing its efforts to improve the diets and

nutritional status of poor rural people through education and nutrition-sensitive agriculture.

Reaching the most vulnerable

IFAD gives special attention to the most vulnerable groups in rural communities: young people, women and indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples account for about 5 per cent of the world's population but 15 per cent of those living in poverty. IFAD's participatory, grass-roots approach and in-country experience give the Fund a strong comparative advantage in working with vulnerable populations, especially in remote rural areas.

Building institutions

The programmes and projects we finance are tailored to reinforce and amplify the effectiveness of national policies. We work closely with agriculture and finance ministries and related institutions to ensure that their support extends to smallholder farmers and their organizations, and that public spending for agriculture reaches the poorest people.

IFAD is also increasing its country presence to promote country leadership and accountability. We work to strengthen national and local capacities – including those of rural communities and civil society organizations – to improve the design, management and impact of strategies and programmes.

Delivering sustainable results

During the period 2010 to 2015, IFAD reached an estimated 139 million people, of whom:

- 43.2 million increased their agricultural revenue
- 28.8 million increased their ownership of poultry
- 22.8 million increased their livestock assets
- 11 million had more diverse diets
- 11.6 million women gained from gender empowerment initiatives
- 24 million people moved out of poverty

A unique mandate

The decision to create IFAD was made in 1974 at the World Food Conference. World leaders agreed that “an international fund ... should be established immediately to finance agricultural development projects”.

The Fund is a unique partnership of members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), other developing countries, and member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Today IFAD has total membership of 176 countries.

Other partners include: United Nations agencies; bilateral and multilateral development agencies; agricultural research centres; NGOs and foundations; policy research institutes and universities; regional organizations; the private sector; and civil society organizations, particularly those representing smallholder farmers and rural people.

Through partnership, we invest in rural development and broker partnerships among the diverse parties working in development, and for South-South and triangular cooperation. IFAD is the international community’s most direct conduit for channelling investment to smallholder family farmers and into rural development.

IFAD brings the point of view of smallholder farmers and rural entrepreneurs to bear on international policy deliberations. We also help them build their capacity so they themselves can participate in and influence relevant policy processes.

IFAD’s headquarters is in Rome, Italy.



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